Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."
JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

The New York "Press," a blatant and narrow Republican sheet, referring to Senator Hill's opposition to the rigid enforcement of the Sunday law, states it as a fact of "standard history" that "there ever has been the thinnest of lines between genuine American Democracy and international anarchy" (using the term in the sense of chaos). If the "Press" had more brains, it would probably see that genuine American Democracy is akin, not to anarchy, but to Anarchy, to the highest order and greatest social harmony.

A new anti-trust law is in force in Texas, under which it is illegal for two or more persons to combine their capital, skill, or acts so as to restrict trade or prevent competition. The letter of this law would render all coöperative undertakings illegal, and even ordinary business partnerships would seem to be impossible under it. Manifestly passed in the interest of labor and against big capitalistic combinations, the law, if really followed out, would crush labor by prohibiting all trades unions and concerted action by workmen. Such are the results of anti-monopoly legislation by men who do not know what monopoly is or what test to apply to industrial combinations in order to determine their character. Such ignorant regulation is hailed with delight by the monopolists and their press mouthpieces, for they are able to use it successfully as a weapon against *all* anti-monopoly efforts. The public does not discriminate between the ranter and the reasoner, the crank and the scientific reformer. It prefers the very convenient Nordau method of classification; all who rebel are declared equally irresponsible.

At the time of the "Debs insurrection" in Chicago a similar insurrection was conducted in California, and omnibus injunctions were issued against hundreds of Pacific railroad strikers. These injunctions were, of course, treated with supreme contempt, but no one was punished for this "contempt of court." Recently, however, several attempts have been made to convict the strikers on criminal charges, with utter failure as the result. In all there were one hundred and thirty cases pending, but the first trials showed the government that convictions were impossible, and the fight is to be given up. Now, the facts in these cases are substantially similar to the facts in Chicago cases, and hence the probabilities are that Debs and his associates, if tried on criminal charges, would be acquitted by the jury. Yet they are now undergoing imprisonment for the same facts. In other words, what is insufficient in the eyes of a jury is entirely sufficient in the eyes of a judge; and, before the jury is called upon to pass upon the question, a judge declares them guilty and sends them to prison. Can there be a greater outrage on justice?

The New York State Democracy, an organization led by the most progressive elements of the party, has adopted a financial platform which has a radical look and sound, but which is found to have very little substance. It condemns, in the first place, interference with the standard of value which "commerce has adopted." Commerce has not been free to adopt any standard, for legislation has never ceased meddling with it. Before commerce can select a standard, all legal-tender laws, all restrictions upon credit and circulation, must be entirely abrogated. Is the State Democracy prepared to demand that? Not at all, although the platform goes on to favor such a repeal of present laws as shall permit the people to provide themselves with a safe and elastic bank-note currency and relieve the treasury of all its responsibilities save that of collecting and disbursing revenue. The trouble with this plank is that the people are to be permitted only to provide themselves with a "safe" currency, congress to be the sole judge of "safety." Such a proviso opens the door to all the abuses which it is intended to shut out.

Several scholars and able controversialists have published replies to Balfour's Quixotic attacks on the evolutionary philosophy of life, but they all have been guilty of the indiscretion and misplaced generosity of treating the "Foundations of Belief" as a serious metaphysical work of great subtlety and strength. As a matter of fact, aside from the question of mere style, the book is as feeble as are the efforts of any half-baked young preacher with semi-modern tendencies to prove the "necessity" of religion as a "complement to science." The veriest tyro in philosophical literature ought to be able to point out Mr. Balfour's obvious fallacious and amusing (if unconscious) method of assuming the very things which the book was written to demonstrate. There is no "argument" in the book that is not puerile and that has not been refuted a thousand times; and, if the same matter were put forth, in a less felicitous manner, by an ordinary theologian, and not by a "future English Premier" dabbling in theology, it would not get any notice even in the most inane portion of the religious press. I am very glad to see that Spencer, in his masterly and cruelly effective article in the last "Fortnightly Review," deals with the English politico-theological Quixote in a straightforward way, without throwing any sops to his large g[illegible]ng suite and without sugarcoating [illegible] he prepares for them. Nothing can be mo[illegible] eloquent and significant than the serenity and good-humor with which Spencer disposes of the Balfourian "best" points, and the calm way in which he insists on treating Christianity merely as one of the many superstitions of which the wide world is so full. Indeed, the article is in Spencer's most happy vein, and the radical who does not devour it misses a rare intellectual treat.

The newspapers recently published a symposium discussing the practical question whether or not an "injured" husband should kill the guilty paramours. Cardinal Gibbons and Dr. Parkhurst, from the Christian standpoint, declare that the husband must forgive; Mr. Depew would not convict the husband of murder if he tried him for killing his wronger, for "it is, above all, one of those cases in which a man must be a law unto himself." Mr. Clews would spare the guilty wife, but he favors the infliction of the death penalty on the lover. W. D. Howells, in commenting on these views, denounces the lay contributors to the symposium as brutal and wild, but of the ecclesiastics he says that they "plant themselves upon the only principle that is really firm under the feet." Amplifying his statement, he continues: "One is struck with the absolute sufficiency of the Christian ethics in this matter. . . . . Forgive that you may be forgiven. . . . . It is all so simple, and it is such an easy way out." No, Mr. Howells, it is a cowardly way out; it is a mere dodge. Your clerical friends do not share your opinion regarding the "absolute sufficiency of Christian ethics," and they screen themselves behind it merely to avoid taking a definite position. If the husband is bound to forgive under Christian ethics, why is the State, or the community, at liberty to punish the paramours by imprisonment? How can these divines support the penal systems of modern societies if forgiveness is enjoined by the absolutely sufficient Christian ethics? Your Christian teachers sanction prisons, flogging, the gallows, and the electric chair, and denounce Tolstoi as a crank and visionary because he really does follow Christian ethics and insists on non-resistance to evil on the part of organized society as well as on the part of individuals. If the divines have an "easy time," Mr. Howells, it is because their hypocrisy and self-stultification are so seldom exposed, and not because they plant themselves upon firm principles.

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"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the excisem[illegible], the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel." — PROUDHON.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

A Degenerate's View of Nordau.

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My dear Tucker:

I have read Max Nordau's "Degeneration" at your request, — two hundred and sixty thousand mortal words, saying the same thing over and over again. That, as you know, is the way to drive a thing into the mind of the world, though Nordau considers it a symptom of insane "obsession" on the part of writers who do not share his own opinions. His message to the world is that all our characteristically modern works of art are symptoms of disease in the artists, and that these diseased artists are themselves symptoms of the nervous exhaustion of the race by overwork.

To me, who am a professional critic of art, and have for many successive London seasons had to watch a grand march past of books, of pictures, of concerts and operas, and of stage plays, there is nothing new in Herr Nordau's outburst. I have heard it all before. At every new birth of energy in art the same alarm has been raised; and, as these alarms always had their public, like prophecies of the end of the world, there is nothing surprising in the fact that a book which might have been produced by playing the resurrection man in the old newspaper rooms of our public libraries, and collecting all the exploded bogey-criticisms of the last half century into a huge volume, should have a considerable success. To give you an idea of the heap of material ready to hand for such a compilation, let me lay before you a sketch of one or two of the Reformations in art which I have myself witnessed.

When I was engaged chiefly in the criticism of pictures, the Impressionist movement was struggling for life in London; and I supported it vigorously because, being the outcome of heightened attention and quickened consciousness on the part of its disciples, it was evidently destined to improve pictures greatly by substituting a natural, observant, real style for a conventional, taken-for-granted, ideal one. The result has entirely justified my choice of sides. I can remember when Mr. Whistler, in order to force the public to observe the qualities he was introducing into pictorial work, had to exhibit a fine drawing of a girl with the head deliberately crossed out with a few rough pencil strokes, knowing perfectly well that, if he left a woman's face discernible, the British Philistine would simply look to see whether she was a pretty girl or not, or whether she represented some of his pet characters in fiction, and pass on without having seen any of the qualities of artistic execution which made the drawing valuable. But it was easier for the critics to resent the obliteration of the face as an insolent eccentricity, and to show their own good manners by writing of Mr. Whistler as "Jimmy," than to think out what he meant. It took several years of "propaganda by deed" before the qualities which the Impressionists insisted on came to be looked for as a matter of course in pictures, so that even the ordinary picture-gallery frequenter, when he came face to face with Bouguereau's "Girl in a Cornfield," instead of accepting it as a window-glimpse of nature, saw at a glance that the girl is really standing in a studio with what the house agents call "a good north light," and that the cornfield is a conventional sham. This advance in public education was effected by persistently exhibiting pictures which, like Mr. Whistler's girl with her head scratched out, were propagandist samples of workmanship rather than complete works of art. But the moment Mr. Whistler and other really able artists forced the dealers and the societies of painters to exhibit these studies, and, by doing so, to accustom the public to tolerate what appeared to it at first to be absurdities, the door was necessarily opened to real absurdities. It is exceedingly difficult to draw or paint well; it is exceedingly easy to smudge paper or canvas so as to suggest a picture just as the stains on an old ceiling or the dark spots in a glowing coal-fire do. Plenty of rubbish of this kind was produced, exhibited, and tolerated at the time when people could not see the difference between any daub in which there were shadows painted in vivid aniline hues and a landscape by Monet. Not that they thought the daub as good as the Monet: they thought the Monet as ridiculous as the daub; but they were afraid to say so, because they had discovered that people who were good judges did not think Monet ridiculous. Then, besides the mere impostors, there were a certain number of highly conscientious painters who produced abnormal pictures because they saw abnormally. My own sight happens to be "normal" in the oculist's sense: that is, I see things with the naked eye as most people can only be made to see them by the aid of spectacles. Once I had a discussion with an artist who was shewing me a clever picture of his in which the parted lips in a pretty woman's face revealed what seemed to me like a mouthful of virgin snow. The painter lectured me for not using my eyes, instead of my knowledge of facts. "You can't see the divisions in a set of teeth, when you look at a person's mouth," he said; "all you can see is a strip of white, or yellow, or pearl, as the case may be; but, because you know, as a matter of anatomic fact, that there are divisions there, you want to have them represented by strokes in a drawing. That is just like you art critics, &c., &c." I do not think he believed me when I told him that, when I looked at a row of teeth, I saw, not only the divisions between them, but their exact shape, both in contour and modelling, just as well as I saw their general color. Some of the most able of the Impressionists evidently did not see forms as definitely as they appreciated color relationship; and, since there is always a great deal of imitation in the arts, we soon had young painters with perfectly good sight looking at landscapes or at their models with their eyes half closed and a little asquint, until what they saw looked to them like one of their favorite master's pictures. Further, the Impressionist movement led to a busy study of the atmosphere, conventionally supposed to be invisible, but seldom really completely so, and of what were called "values": that is, the relation of light and dark between the various objects depicted, on the correctness of which relation truth of effect mainly depends. This proved very difficult in full out-door light with the "local color" brilliantly visible, and comparatively easy in gloomy rooms where the absence of light reduced all objects to masses of brown or grey of varying depth with hardly any discernible local color. Whistler's portrait of Sarasate, a masterpiece in its way, looks like a study in monochrome beside a portrait by Holbein; and his cleverest followers could paint dark interiors, or figures placed apparently in coal cellars, with admirable truth and delicacy of "value" sense, whilst they were still helplessly unable to represent a green tree or a blue sky, much less paint an interior with the light and local color as clear as in the works of Peter de Hooghe. Naturally the public eye, with its utilitarian familiarity with local color, and its Philistine insensibility to values and atmosphere, did not at first see what the Impressionists were driving at, and dismissed them as mere perverse, notoriety-hunting cranks.

Here, then, you had a movement in painting which was wholly beneficial and progressive, and in no sense insane or decadent. Nevertheless it led to the public exhibition of daubs which even the authors themselves would never have presumed to offer for exhibition before; it betrayed aberrations of vision in painters who, on the old academic lines, would have hidden their defects by drawing objects (teeth, for instance) as they knew them to exist, and not as they saw them; it set hundreds of clear-sighted students practising optical distortion, so as to see things myopically; and it substituted canvases which looked like enlargements of obscure photographs for the familiar portraits of masters of the hounds in cheerfully unmistakable pink coats, mounted on bright chestnut horses. All of which, and much else, to a man who looked on at it without any sense of the deficiencies in conventional painting, necessarily suggested that the Impressionists and their contemporaries were much less sane than their fathers.

Again, my duties as a musical critic compelled me to ascertain very carefully the exact bearings of the controversy which has raged round Wagner's music-dramas since the middle of the century. When you and I last met, we were basking in the sun between the acts of "Parsifal" at Bayreuth; but experience has taught me that an American may appear at Bayreuth without being necessarily fonder than most men of a technical discussion on music. Let me therefore put the case to you in a merci-

fully intelligible way. Music is like drawing in this respect, — that it can be purely decorative, or purely dramatic, or anything between the two. A draughtsman may be a pattern-designer, like William Morris, or he may be a delineator of life and character, like Ford Madox Brown. Or he may come between these two extremes, and treat scenes of life and character in a decorative way, like Walter Crane or Burne Jones, — both of them consummate pattern-designers, whose subject pictures and illustrations are also fundamentally figure-patterns, prettier, but much less convincingly human and real, than Madox Brown's. Now, in music we have these same alternative applications of the art to drama and decoration. You can compose a graceful, symmetrical sound-pattern that exists solely for the sake of its own grace and symmetry. Or you can compose music to heighten the expression of human emotion; and such music will be intensely affecting in the presence of that emotion, and utter nonsense apart from it. For examples of pure pattern-designing in music I should have to go back to the old music of the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, before the operatic movement gained the upper hand; but I am afraid my assertions that much of this music is very beautiful and hugely superior to the stuff our music publishers turn out today would not be believed in America; for, when I hinted at something of the kind lately in the American "Musical Courier," and pointed out also the beauty of the instruments for which this old music was written, — viols, virginals, and so on, — one of your leading musical critics rebuked me with an expatiation on the superiority (meaning apparently the greater loudness) of the modern concert grand pianoforte, and contemptuously ordered the middle ages out from the majestic presence of the nineteenth century. Perhaps, however, you will take my word for it that in England alone a long line of composers, from Henry VIII to Henry Purcell, have left us quantities of instrumental music which was not dramatic music nor "programme music," but which was designed to affect the hearer solely by its beauty of sound and grace and ingenuity of pattern. This is the art which Wagner called "absolute music." It is represented today by the formal sonata and symphony; and we are coming back to it in something like its old integrity by a post-Wagnerian reaction led by that greatly gifted absolute musician and hopelessly commonplace and tedious dramatic composer, Johannes Brahms.

To understand the present muddle, you must know that modern dramatic music did not appear as an independent branch of musical art, but as an adulteration of absolute music. The first modern dramatic composers accepted as binding on them the rules of good pattern-designing in sound; and this absurdity was made to appear practicable by the fact that Mozart had such an extraordinary command of his art that his operas contain "numbers" which, though they seem to follow the dramatic play of emotion and character without reference to any other consideration whatever, are seen, on examining them from the point of view of the absolute musician, to be perfectly symmetrical sound-patterns. But these *tours de force* were no real justification for imposing the laws of pattern-designing on other dramatic musicians; and even Mozart himself broke away from them in all directions, and was violently attacked by his contemporaries for doing so, the accusations levelled at him — absence of melody, illegitimate and discordant harmonic progressions, and monstrous abuse of the orchestra — being exactly those with which the opponents of Wagner so often pester ourselves. Wagner, whose leading lay characteristic was his enormous common sense, completed the emancipation of the dramatic musician from these laws of pattern-designing, and we now have operas, and very good ones too, written by composers like Bruneau or Boito, who are not musicians in the old sense at all, — that is, they do not compose music apart from drama, and, when they have to furnish their operas with instrumental preludes or intermezzos or the like, they either take themes from the dramatic part of their operas and rhapsodize on them, or else they turn out some perfectly simple song or dance tune, at the cheapness of which Haydn would have laughed heartily, in spite of its orchestral and harmonic fineries.

If I add now that music in the academic, professorial, Conservative, respectable sense always means absolute music, and that students are taught that the laws of pattern-designing are binding on all musicians, and that violations of them are absolutely "wrong"; and if I mention incidentally that these laws are themselves confused by the survivals from a still older tradition based on the church art, technically very highly specialized, of writing perfectly smooth and beautiful vocal harmony, for unaccompanied voices, worthy to be sung by angelic doctors round the throne of God (this was Palestrina's art), — you will understand why it was that all the professional musicians who could not see beyond the routine which they were taught, and all the men and women (and there are many of them) who have little or no sense of drama, but a very keen sense of beauty of sound and prettiness of pattern in music, regarded Wagner as a madman who was reducing music to chaos, perversely introducing ugly and brutal sounds into a region where beauty and grace had reigned alone, and substituting an incoherent, aimless, endless meandering for the familiar symmetrical tunes in four-bar strains, like "Pop Goes the Weazel," in which the second and third strains repeat, or nearly repeat, the first and second, so that any one can remember them and treasure them like nursery rhymes. It was the unprofessional, "unmusical" public which caught the dramatic clue, and saw order and power, strength and sanity in the supposed Wagner chaos; and now, his battle being won and overwon, the professors, to avert the ridicule of their pupils, are compelled to explain (quite truly) that Wagner's technical procedure in music is almost pedantically logical and grammatical; that the "Lohengrin" prelude is a masterpiece of the "form" proper to its aim; and that his disregard of "false relations," and his free use of the most extreme discords without "preparation," were straight and sensible instances of that natural development of harmony which has proceeded continuously from the time when common six-four chords were considered "wrong," and such free use of unprepared dominant sevenths and minor ninths as had become common in Mozart's time would have seemed the maddest cacophony.

The dramatic development also touched purely instrumental music. Liszt was no more an absolute musician than Wagner was. He wanted a symphony to express an emotion and its development, not to be a pretty sound-pattern. And he defined the emotion by connecting it with some known story, poem, or even picture, — Mazeppa, Victor Hugo's "Les Preludes," Kaulbach's "Die Hunnenschlacht," or the like. But the moment you try to make an instrumental composition follow a story, you are forced to abandon the sound-pattern form, since all patterns consist of some decorative form which is repeated over and over again, and which generally consists in itself of a repetition of two similar halves; for example, if you take a playing card — say the five of diamonds — as a simple example of a pattern, you find not only that the diamond figure is repeated five times, but that each side of each pip is a reversed duplicate of the other. Now, the established form for a symphony is essentially a pattern form involving just such symmetrical repetitions; and, since a story does not repeat itself, but pursues a continuous chain of fresh incident and correspondingly varied emotions, Liszt had either to find a new musical form for his musical poems, or else face the intolerable anomalies and absurdities which spoil the many attempts made by Mendelssohn, Raff, and others to handcuff the old form to the new matter. Consequently he invented the "symphonic poem," a perfectly simple and fitting common-sense form for his purpose, and one which makes "Les Preludes" much plainer sailing for the ordinary hearer than Mendelssohn's "Naiades" overture or Raff's "Lenore" or "Im Walde" symphonies, in both of which the formal repetitions would stamp Raff as a madman if we did not know that they were mere superstitions, which he had not the strength of mind to shake off as Liszt did. But still, to the people who would not read Liszt's explanations and cared nothing for his purpose, who had no taste for "tone poetry" and consequently insisted on judging the symphonic poems as sound-patterns, Liszt must needs appear, like Wagner, a perverse egotist with something fundamentally disordered in his intellect, -- in short, a lunatic.

The sequel was the same as in the Impressionist movement. Wagner, Berlioz, and Liszt, in securing tolerance for their own works, secured it for what sounded to many people absurd; and this tolerance necessarily extended to a great deal of stuff which was really absurd, but which the secretly-bewildered critics dared not denounce, lest it, too, should turn out to be great, like the music of Wagner, over which they had made the most ludicrous exhibition of their incompetence. Even at such stupidly conservative concerts as those of the London Philharmonic Society, I have seen ultra-modern composers, supposed to be representatives of the Wagnerian movement, conducting rubbish in no essential superior to Jullien's British army quadrilles. And then, of course, there are the young imitators, who are corrupted by the desire to make their harmonies sound like those of the masters whose purposes and principles of work they are too young to understand.

Here, again, you see, you have a progressive, intelligent, wholesome, and thoroughly sane movement in art, producing plenty of evidence to prove the case of any clever man who does not understand music, but who has a theory which involves the proposition that all the leaders of the art movements of our time are degenerate and, consequently, retrogressive lunatics.

There is no need for me to go at any great length into the grounds on which any development in our moral views must at first appear insane and blasphemous to people who are satisfied, or more than satisfied, with the current morality. Perhaps you remember the opening chapters of my "Quintessence of Ibsenism," in which I shewed why the London press, now abjectly polite to Ibsen, received him four years ago with a shriek of horror. Every step in morals is made by challenging the validity of the existing conception of perfect propriety of conduct; and, when a man does that, he must look out for a very different reception from the painter who has ventured to paint a shadow brilliant purple, or the composer who begins the prelude to his opera with an unprepared chord of the thirteenth. Heterodoxy in art is at worst rated as eccentricity or folly; heterodoxy in morals is at once rated as scoundrelism, and, what is worse, propagandist scoundrelism, which must, if successful, undermine society and bring us back to barbarism after a period of decadence like that which brought imperial Rome to its downfall. Your function as a philosophic Anarchist in American society is to combat the attempts that are constantly being made to arrest development by using the force of the State to suppress all departures from what the majority consider to be "right" in conduct or overt opinion. I dare say you find the modern democratic voter a very troublesome person, chicken-heartedly diffident as to the value of his opinions on art or science, but cocksure about right and wrong in morals, politics, and religion, — that is to say, in all the departments in which he can interfere effectively and mischievously. Happily, the individual is developing greatly in freedom and boldness nowadays. Formerly our young people mostly waited in diffident silence until they were old enough to find their aspirations towards the fullest attainable activity and satisfaction working out in practice very much as they have worked out in the life of the race; so that the revolutionist of twenty-five, who saw nothing for it but a clean sweep of all our institutions, found himself, at forty, accepting and even clinging to them on condition of a few reforms to bring them up to date. But nowadays the young people do not wait so patiently for this reconciliation. They express their dissatisfaction with the wisdom of their elders loudly and irreverently, and formulate their heresy as a faith. They demand the abolition of marriage, of the State, of the Church; they preach the divinity of love and the heroism of the man who believes in himself and dares do the thing he wills; they contemn the slavery to duty and discipline which has left so many soured old people with nothing but envious regrets for a virtuous youth. They recognize their gospel in such utterances as that quoted by Nordau from Brandes: "To obey one's senses is to have character. He who allows himself to be guided by his passions has individuality." For my part, I think this excellent doctrine, both in Brandes's form and in the older form: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." This is not the opinion of Nordau, who, with facile journalistic vulgarity, proceeds to express his horror of Brandes with all the usual epithets, — "debauchery, dissoluteness, depravity disguised as modernity, bestial instincts, *maître de plaisir*, egomaniacal anarchist," — and such sentences as the following:

> It is comprehensible that an educator who turns the school-room into a tavern and a brothel should have success and a crowd of followers. He certainly runs the risk of being slain by the parents, if they come to know what he is teaching their children; but the pupils will hardly complain, and will be eager to attend the lessons of so agreeable a teacher. This is the explanation of the influence Brandes gained over the youth of his country, such as his writings, with their emptiness of thought and unending tattle, would certainly never have procured for him.

In order to thoroughly enjoy this spluttering, you must know that it is immediately followed by an attack on Ibsen for the weakness of "obsession by the doctrine of original sin." Yet what would the passage I have just quoted be without the doctrine of original sin as a postulate? If "the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," then, truly, the man who allows himself to be guided by his passions must needs be a scoundrel, and his teacher might well be slain by his parents. But how if the youth thrown helpless on his passions found that honesty, that self-respect, that hatred of cruelty and injustice, that the desire for soundness and health and efficiency, were master passions, — nay, that their excess is so dangerous to youth that it is part of the wisdom of age to say to the young: "Be not righteous overmuch: why shouldst thou destroy thyself?" I am sure, my dear Tucker, your friends have paraphrased that in vernacular American often enough in remonstrating with you for your Anarchism, which defies not only God, but even the wisdom of the United States congress. On the other hand, the people who profess to renounce and abjure their own passions, and ostentatiously regulate their conduct by the most convenient interpretation of what the Bible means, or, worse still, by their ability to find reasons for it (as if there were not excellent reasons to be found for every conceivable course of conduct, from dynamite and vivisection to martyrdom), seldom need a warning against being righteous overmuch, their attention, indeed, often needing a rather pressing jog in the opposite direction. The truth is that passion is the steam in the engine of all religions and moral systems. In so far as it is malevolent, the religions are malevolent too, and insist on human sacrifices, on hell, wrath, and vengeance. You cannot read Browning's "Caliban upon Setebos, or, Natural Theology on the Island" without admitting that all our religions have been made as Caliban made his, and that the difference between Caliban and Prospero is that Prospero is mastered by holier passions. And as Caliban imagined his theology, so did Mill reason out his essay on "Liberty" and Spencer his "Data of Ethics." In them we find the authors still trying to formulate abstract principles of conduct, — still missing the fact that truth and justice are not abstract principles external to man, but human passions, which have, in their time, inflicted with higher passions as well as with lower ones. If a young woman, in a mood of strong reaction against the preaching of duty and self-sacrifice and the rest of it, were to tell Mr. Herbert Spencer that she was determined not to murder her own instincts and throw away her life in obedience to a mouthful of empty phrases, I suspect he would recommend the "Data of Ethics" to her as a trustworthy and conclusive guide to conduct. Under similar circumstances I should unhesitatingly say to the young woman: "By all means do as you propose. Try how wicked you can be; it is precisely the same experiment as trying how good you can be. At worst you will only find out the sort of person you really are. At best you will find that your passions, if you really and honestly let them all loose impartially, will discipline you with a severity which your conventional friends, abandoning themselves to the mechanical routine of fashion, could not stand for a day." As a matter of fact, I have seen over and over again this comedy of the "emancipated" young enthusiast flinging duty and religion, convention and parental authority, to the winds, only to find herself becoming, for the first time in her life, plunged into duties, responsibilities, and sacrifices from which she is often glad to retreat, after a few years' wearing down of her enthusiasm, into the comparatively loose life of an ordinary respectable woman of fashion. The truth is, laws, religions, creeds, and systems of ethics, instead of making society better than its best unit, make it worse than its average unit, because they are never up to date. You will ask me: "Why have them at all?" I will tell you. They are made necessary — though we all secretly detest them — by the fact that the number of people who can think out a line of conduct for themselves even on one point is very small, and the number who can afford the time for it still smaller. Nobody can afford the time to do it on all points. The professional thinker may on occasion make his own morality and philosophy as the cobbler may make his own boots; but the ordinary man of business must buy at the shop, so to speak, and put up with what he finds on sale there, whether it exactly suits him or not, because he can neither make a morality for himself or do without one. This typewriter with which I am writing is the best I can get; but it is by no means a perfect instrument; and I have not the smallest doubt that in fifty years' time the authors of that day will wonder how men could have put up with so clumsy a contrivance. When a better one is invented, I shall buy it: until then, I must make the best of it, just as my Protestant and Roman Catholic and Agnostic friends make the best of their creeds and systems. This would be better recognized if people took consciously and deliberately to the use of creeds as they do to the use of typewriters. Just as the traffic of a great city would be impossible without a code of rules of the road which not one wagoner in a thousand could draw up for himself, much less promulgate, and without, in London at least, an unquestioning consent to treat the policeman's raised hand as if it were an impassable

bar stretched half across the road, so the average man is still unable to get through the world without being told what to do at every turn, and basing such calculations as he is capable of on the assumption that every one else will calculate on the same assumptions. Even your man of genius accepts a thousand rules for every one he challenges; and you may lodge in the same house with an Anarchist for ten years without noticing anything exceptional about him. Martin Luther, the priest, horrified the greater half of Christendom by marrying a nun, yet was a submissive conformist in countless ways, living orderly as a husband and father, wearing what his bootmaker and tailor made for him, and dwelling in what the builder built for him, although he would have died rather than take his Church from the Pope. And when he got a Church made by himself to his liking, generations of men calling themselves Lutherans took that Church from him just as unquestioningly as he took the fashion of his clothes from his tailor. As the race evolves, many a convention which recommends itself by its obvious utility to every one passes into an automatic habit, like breathing; and meanwhile the improvement in our nerves and judgment enlarges the list of emergencies which individuals may be trusted to deal with on the spur of the moment without reference to regulations; but there will for many centuries to come be a huge demand for a ready-made code of conduct for general use, which will be used more or less as a matter of overwhelming convenience by all members of communities. Oh, Father Tucker, worshipper of Liberty! where shall I find a country where the thinking can be done without division of labor?

It follows that we can hardly fall into any error stupider than that of mistaking creeds and the laws founded on creeds for the applications to human conduct of eternal and immutable principles of good and evil. It sets people regarding laws as institutions too sacred to be tampered with, whereas in a progressive community nothing can make laws tolerable unless their changes and modifications are kept closely on the heels of the changes and modifications which are continuously proceeding in the minds and habits of the people; and it deadens the conscience of individuals by relieving them of the moral responsibility of their own actions. When this relief is made as complete as possible, it reduces a man to a condition in which his very virtues are contemptible. Military discipline, for example, aims at destroying the individuality and initiative of the soldier whilst increasing his mechanical efficiency, until he is simply a weapon with the power of hearing and obeying orders. In him you have duty, obedience, self-denial, submission to external authority, carried as far as it can be carried; and the result is that in England, where military service is voluntary, the common soldier is less respected than any other serviceable worker in the community. The police constable, who, though under discipline too, is a civilian and has to use his own judgment and act on his own responsibility in innumerable petty emergencies, is by comparison a popular and esteemed citizen. The Roman Catholic peasant who consults his parish priest instead of his conscience, and submits wholly to the authority of the Church, is mastered and governed either by statesmen or cardinals who despise his superstition, or by Protestants who are at least allowed to persuade themselves that they have arrived at their religious opinions through the exercise of their private judgment. The whole progress of the world is from submission and obedience as safeguards against panic and incontinence, to wilfulness and self-assertion made safe by reason and self-control, just as plainly as the physical growth of the individual leads from the perambulator and the nurse's apron-string to the power of walking alone, or his moral growth from the tutelage of the boy to the responsibility of the man. But it is useless for impatient spirits — you and I, for instance — to call on people to walk before they can stand. Without high gifts of reason and self-control — that is, without strong common sense — no man dare yet trust himself out of the school of authority. What he does is to claim gradual relaxations of the discipline, so as to have as much freedom as he thinks is good for him and as much government as he needs to keep him straight. We see this in the history of British-American Christianity. Man, as the hero of that history, starts by accepting as binding on him the revelation of God's will as interpreted by the Church. Then he claims a formal right to exercise his own judgment, which the Reformed Church, competing with the Unreformed for clients, grants him on condition that he arrive at the same conclusions as itself. Later on, he violates this condition in certain particulars, and "dissents," flying to America in the Mayflower from the prison of Conformity, but promptly building a new jail, suited to the needs of his sect, in his adopted country. For all these little mutinies he finds excellent arguments to prove that he is exchanging a false authority for *the* true one, never daring even to think of brazenly admitting that what he is really doing is substituting his own will, bit by bit, for what he calls the will of God or the laws of Nature. The arguments so accustom the world to submit authority to the test of discussion that he is at last emboldened to claim the right to do anything he can find good arguments for, even to the extent of questioning the scientific accuracy of the book of Genesis and the validity of the popular conception of God as an omniscient, omnipotent, and very serious old gentleman sitting on a throne above the clouds. This seems a giant stride towards emancipation; but it leaves our hero, as Rationalist and Materialist, regarding Reason as an eternal principle, independent of and superior to his erring passions, at which point it is easy to suggest that perhaps the experienced authority of a Roman Catholic Church might be better than the first crop of arguments raised by a handful of raw Rationalists in their sects of "Freethinkers" and "Secularists" for the working class, and "Positivists" or "Don't Knowists" (Agnostics) for the genteel votaries of the new fetich.

In the meantime came Schopenhauer to reestablish the old theological doctrine that reason is no motive power; that the true motive power in the world — otherwise life — is will; and that the setting up of reason above will is a damnable error. But the theologians could not open their arms to Schopenhauer, because he fell into the cardinal Rationalist error of making happiness instead of completeness of activity the test of the value of life, and of course came to the idiotic pessimist conclusion that life is not worth living, and that the will which urges us to live in spite of this is necessarily a malign torturer, the desirable end of all things being the Nirvana of the stilling of the will and the consequent setting of life's sun "into the blind cave of eternal night." Further, the will of the theologians was the will of God, standing outside man and in authority above him, whereas the Schopenhauerian will is a purely secular force of nature, attaining various degrees of organization, here as a jelly fish, there as a cabbage, more complexly as an ape or a tiger, and attaining its highest form so far in the human being. As to the Rationalists, they approved of Schopenhauer's secularism and pessimism, but of course could not stomach his metaphysical method or his dethronement of reason by will. Accordingly, his turn for popularity did not come until after Darwin's, and then mostly through the influence of two great artists, Richard Wagner and Ibsen, whose "Tristan" and "Emperor or Galilean" shew that Schopenhauer was a true pioneer in the forward march of the human spirit. We can now, as soon as we are strong-minded enough, drop the Nirvana nonsense, the pessimism, the rationalism, the theology, and all the other subterfuges to which we cling because we are afraid to look life straight in the face and see in it, not the fulfilment of a moral law or of the deductions of reason, but the satisfaction of a passion in us of which we can give no account whatever. It is natural for man to shrink from the terrible responsibility thrown on him by this inexorable fact. All his stock excuses vanish before it, — "The woman tempted me," "The serpent tempted me," "I was not myself at the time," "I meant well," "My passion got the better of my reason," "It was my duty to do it," "The Bible says that we should do it," "Everybody does it," and so on. Nothing is left but the frank avowal: "I did it because I am built that way." Every man hates to say that. He wants to believe that his generous actions are characteristic of him, and that his meannesses are aberrations or concessions to the force of circumstances. Our murderers, with the assistance of the jail chaplain, square accounts with the devil and with God, never with themselves. The convict gives every reason for his having stolen something except the reason that he is a thief. Cruel people flog their children for their children's good, or offer the information that a guinea pig perspires under atrocious torture as an affectionate contribution to science. Lynched negroes are riddled by dozens of superfluous bullets, every one of which is offered as the expression of a sense of outraged justice and womanhood in the scamp and libertine who fires it. And such is the desire of men to keep one another in countenance that they positively demand such excuses from one another as a matter of public decency. An uncle of mine, who made it a rule to offer tramps a job when they begged from him, naturally very soon became familiar with every excuse that human ingenuity can invent for not working. But he lost his temper only once; and that was with a tramp who frankly replied that he was too lazy. This my uncle described with disgust as "cynicism." And yet our family arms bear

the motto, in Latin, "Know thyself."

As you know, the true trend of this movement has been mistaken by many of its supporters as well as by its opponents. The ingrained habit of thinking of the propensities of which we are ashamed as "our passions," and our shame of them and our propensities to noble conduct as a negative and inhibitory department called generally our conscience, leads us to conclude that to accept the guidance of our passions is to plunge recklessly into the insupportable tedium of what is called a life of pleasure. Reactionists against the almost equally insupportable slavery of what is called a life of duty are nevertheless willing to venture on these terms. The "revolted daughter," exasperated at being systematically lied to by her parents on every subject of vital importance to an eager and intensely curious young student of life, allies herself with really vicious people and with humorists who like to shock the pious with gay paradoxes, in claiming an impossible license in personal conduct. No great harm is done beyond the inevitable and temporary excesses produced by all reactions; for, as I have said, the would-be wicked ones find, when they come to the point, that the indispensable qualification for a wicked life is not freedom, but wickedness. But the misunderstanding supports the clamor of the opponents of the newest opinions, who naturally shriek as Nordau shrieks in the passages about Brandes, quoted above. Thus you have here again a movement which is thoroughly beneficial and progressive presenting a hideous appearance of moral corruption and decay, not only to our old-fashioned religious folk, but to our comparatively modern scientific folk as well. And here again, because the press and the gossips have found out that this apparent corruption and decay is considered the right thing in some influential quarters, and must be spoken of with respect, and patronized and published and sold and read, we have a certain number of pitiful imitators taking advantage of their tolerance to bring out really silly and rotten stuff, which the reviewers are afraid to expose, lest it, too, should turn out to be the correct thing.

After this long preamble, you will have no difficulty in understanding the sort of book Nordau has written. Figure to yourself a huge volume, stuffed with the most slashing of the criticisms which were hurled at the Impressionists, the Tone Poets, and the philosophers and dramatists of the Schopenhauerian revival, before these movements had reached the point at which it began to require some real courage to attack them. Imagine a *rechauffée*, not only of the newspaper criticisms of this period, but actually of all its little parasitic paragraphs of small talk and scandal, from the long-forgotten jibes against Mr. Oscar Wilde's momentary attempt to bring knee-breeches into fashion years ago, to the latest scurrilities about "the New Woman." Imagine the general staleness and occasional putrescence of this mess disguised by a dressing of the terminology invented by Krafft-Ebing, Lombroso, and all the latest specialists in madness and crime, to describe the artistic faculties and propensities as they operate in the insane. Imagine all this done by a man who is a vigorous and capable journalist, shrewd enough to see that there is a good opening for a big reactionary book as a relief to the Wagner and Ibsen booms, bold enough to let himself go without respect to persons or reputations, lucky enough to be a stronger, clearer-headed man than ninety-nine out of a hundred of his critics, besides having a keener interest in science, a born theorist, reasoner, and busybody, and so able, without insight, originality, or even any very remarkable intensive industry (he is, like most Germans, extensively industrious to an appalling degree), to produce a book which has made a very considerable impression on the artistic ignorance of Europe and America. For he says a thing as if he meant it; he holds superficial ideas obstinately, and sees them clearly; and his mind works so impetuously that it is a pleasure to watch it — for a while. All the same, he is shallow and unfeeling enough to be the dupe of a theory which would hardly impose on one of those gamblers who have a system or martingale, founded on a solid rock of algebra, by which they can infallibly break the bank at Monte Carlo. "Psychiatry" takes the place of algebra in Nordau's martingale.

This theory of his is, at bottom, nothing but the familiar delusion of the used-up man that the world is going to the dogs. But Nordau is too clever to be driven back on ready-made mistakes; he makes them for himself in his own way. He appeals to the prodigious extension of the quantity of business that a single man can transact through the modern machinery of social intercourse, — the railway, the telegraph and telephone, the post, and so forth. He gives appalling statistics of the increase of railway mileage and shipping, of the number of letters written per head of the population, of the newspapers which tell us things of which we used to know nothing.* "In the last fifty years," he says, "the population of Europe has not doubled, whereas the sum of its labors has increased tenfold, — in part, even fiftyfold. Every civilized man furnishes, at the present time, from five to twenty-five times as much work as was demanded of him half a century ago."† Then follow more statistics of "the constant increase of crime, madness, and suicide," of increases in the mortality from diseases of the nerves and heart, of increased consumption of stimulants, of new nervous diseases like "railway spine and railway brain," with the general moral that we are all suffering from exhaustion, and that symptoms of degeneracy are visible in all directions, culminating at various points in such hysterical horrors as Wagner's music, Ibsen's dramas, Manet's pictures, Tolstoi's novels, Whitman's poetry, Dr. Jaeger's woollen clothing, vegetarianism, scepticism as to the infallibility of vivisection and vaccination, Anarchism and humanitarianism, and, in short, everything that Herr Nordau does not happen to approve of.

You will at once see that such a case, if well got up and argued, is worth hearing, even though its advocate has no chance of a verdict, because it is sure to bring out a certain number of facts which are interesting and important. It is, I take it, quite true that, with our railways and our postal services, many of us are for the moment very like a pedestrian converted to bicycling, who, instead of using his machine to go forty miles with less labor than he used to walk twenty, proceeds to do a hundred miles instead, with the result that the "labor-saving" contrivance acts as a means of working its user to exhaustion. It is also, of course, true that under our existing industrial system machinery in industrial processes is regarded solely as a means of extracting a larger product from the unremitted toil of the actual wage-worker. And I do not think any person who is in touch with the artistic professions will deny that they are recruited largely by persons who become actors, or painters, or journalists and authors because they are incapable of steady work and regular habits, or that the attraction which the patrons of the stage, music, and literature find in their favorite arts has often little or nothing to do with the need which nerves great artists to the heavy travail of creation. The claim of art to our respect must stand or fall with the validity of its pretension to cultivate and refine our senses and faculties until seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling, and tasting become highly conscious and critical acts with us, protesting vehemently against ugliness, noise, discordant speech, frowsy clothing, and foul air, and taking keen interest and pleasure in beauty, in music, and in the open air, besides making us insist, as necessary for comfort and decency, on clean, wholesome, handsome fabrics to wear, and utensils of fine material and elegant workmanship to handle. Further, art should refine our sense of character and conduct, of justice and sympathy, greatly heightening our self-knowledge, self-control, precision of action, and considerateness, and making us intolerant of baseness, cruelty, injustice, and intellectual superficiality or vulgarity. The worthy artist or craftsman is he who responds to this cultivation of the physical and moral senses by feeding them with pictures, musical compositions, pleasant houses and gardens, good clothes and fine implements, poems, fictions, essays, and dramas which call the heightened senses and ennobled faculties into pleasurable activity. The great artist is he who goes a step beyond the demand, and, by supplying works of a higher beauty and a higher interest than have yet been perceived, succeeds, after a brief struggle with its strangeness, in adding this fresh extension of sense to the heritage of the race. This is why we value art; this is why we feel that the iconoclast and the Puritan are attacking something made holier, by solid usefulness, than their own theories of purity; this is why art has won the privileges of religion; so that London shopkeepers who would fiercely resent a compulsory church rate, who do not know "Yankee Doo-

* Perhaps I had better remark in passing that, unless it were true — which it is not — that the length of the modern penny letter or halfpenny post-card is the same as that of the eighteenth-century letter, and that the number of persons who know how to read and write has not increased, there is no reason whatever to draw Nordau's conclusion from these statistics.

† Here again we have a statement which means nothing, unless it be compared with statistics as to the multiplication of the civilized man's power of production by machinery, which in some industries has multiplied a single man's power by hundreds and in others by thousands. As to crimes and disease, Nordau should state whether he counts convictions under modern laws — for offences against the Joint-Stock Company Acts, for instance — as proving that we have degenerated since those Acts were passed, and whether he regards the invention of new names for a dozen varieties of fever which were formerly counted as one single disease as an evidence of decaying health in the face of the increasing duration of life.

dle" from "God Save the Queen," and who are more interested in the photograph of the latest celebrity than in the Velasquez portrait in the National Gallery, tamely allow the London county council to spend their money on bands, on municipal art inspectors, and on plaster casts from the antique.

But the business of responding to the demand for the gratification of the senses has many grades. The confectioner who makes unwholesome sweets, the bull-fighter, the women whose advertisements in the Chicago papers are so astounding to English people, are examples ready to hand to shew what the art and trade of pleasing may be, not at its lowest, but at the lowest that we can speak of without intolerable shame. We have dramatists who write their lines in such a way as to enable low comedians of a certain class to give them an indecorous turn; we have painters who aim no higher than Giulio Romano did when he decorated the Palazzo Te in Mantua; we have poets who have nothing to versify but the commonplaces of amorous infatuation; and, worse than all the rest put together, we have journalists who openly profess that it is their duty to "reflect" what they believe to be the ignorance and prejudice of their readers, instead of leading and enlightening them to the best of their ability,—an excuse for cowardice and time-serving which is also becoming well worn in political circles as "the duty of a democratic statesman." In short, the artist can be a prostitute, a pander, and a flatterer more easily, as far as external pressure goes, than a faithful servant of the community, much less the founder of a school or the father of a church. Even an artist who is doing the best he can may be doing a very low class of work: for instance, many performers at the rougher music halls, who get their living by singing coarse songs in the rowdiest possible way, do so to the utmost of their ability in that direction in the most conscientious spirit of earning their money honestly and being a credit to their profession. And the exaltation of the greatest artists is not continuous; you cannot defend every line of Shakspere or every stroke of Titian. Since the artist is a man and his patron a man, all human moods and grades of development are reflected in art; consequently the Puritan's or the Philistine's indictment of art has as many counts as the misanthrope's indictment of humanity. And this is the Achilles' heel of art at which Nordau has struck. He has piled the Puritan on the Philistine, the Philistine on the misanthrope, in order to make out his case. Let me describe to you one or two of his typical artifices as a special pleader making the most of the eddies at the sides of the stream of progress.

Chief among his tricks is the old and effective one of pointing out, as "stigmata of degeneration" in the person he is abusing, features which are common to the whole human race. The drawing-room palmist astonishes ladies by telling them "secrets" about themselves which are nothing but the inevitable experiences of ninety-nine people out of every hundred, though each individual is vain enough to suppose that they are peculiar to herself. Nordau turns the trick inside out by trusting to the fact that people are in the habit of assuming that uniformity and symmetry are laws of nature,—for example, that every normal person's face is precisely symmetrical, that all persons have the same number of bones in their bodies, and so on. Nordau takes advantage of this popular error to claim asymmetry as a stigma of degeneration. As a matter of fact, perfect symmetry or uniformity is the rarest thing in nature. My two profiles, when photographed, are hardly recognizable as belonging to the same person by those who do not know me; so that the camera would prove me an utter degenerate if my case were exceptional. Probably, however, you would not object to testify that my face is as symmetrical as faces are ordinarily made. Another unfailing trick is the common one of having two names for the same thing,—one of them abusive, the other complimentary,—for use according to circumstances. You know how it is done: "We trust the government will be firm" in one paper, and "We hope ministers will not be obstinate" in another. The following is a typical specimen of Nordau's use of this device. When a man with a turn for rhyming goes mad, he repeats rhymes as if he were quoting a rhyming dictionary. You say "Come" to him, and he starts away with "Dumb, plum, sum, rum, numb, gum," and so on. This the doctors call "echolalia." Dickens gives a specimen of indulgence in it by sane people in "Great Expectations," where Mr. Jaggers's Jewish client expresses his rapture of admiration for the lawyer by exclaiming: "Oh, Jaggerth, Jaggerth, Jaggerth; all otherth ith Cag-Maggerth, give me Jaggerth!" There are some well-known verses by Swinburne, beginning, "If love were what the rose is," which, rhyming and tripping along very prettily, express a sentiment without making any intelligible statement whatsoever; and we have plenty of nonsensically inconsequent nursery rhymes, like "Ba, ba, black sheep," or "Old Daddy long legs," which please perfectly sane children just as Mr. Swinburne's verses please perfectly sane adults, simply as funny or pretty little word-patterns. People do not write such things for the sake of conveying information, but for the sake of amusing and pleasing, just as people do not eat strawberries and cream to nourish their bones and muscles, but to enjoy the taste of a toothsome dish. A lunatic may plead that he eats kitchen soap and tin tacks on exactly the same ground; and, as far as I can see, the lunatic would completely shut up Nordau by this argument: for Nordau is absurd enough, in the case of rhyming, to claim that every rhyme made for its own sake, as proved by the fact that it does not convey an intelligible statement of fact of any kind, convicts the rhymer of "echolalia," or the disease of the lunatic who, when you ask him to come in to dinner, begins to reel off "Sinner, skinner, thinner, winner," &c., instead of accepting the invitation or making a sensible answer. Nordau can thus convict any poet whom he dislikes of being a degenerate by simply picking out a rhyme which exists for its own sake, or a pun, or what is called a "burden" in a ballad, and claiming them as symptoms of "echolalia," supporting this diagnosis by carefully examining the poem for contradictions and inconsistencies as to time, place, description, or the like. It will occur to you probably that by this means he must bring out Shakspere as the champion instance of poetic degeneracy, since Shakspere was an incorrigible punster, delighted in "burdens,"—for instance, "With hey, ho, the wind and the rain," which exactly fulfils all the conditions accepted by Nordau as symptomatic of insanity in Rossetti's case,—and rhymed for the sake of rhyming in a quite childish fashion, whilst, as to contradictions and inconsistencies, "Midsummer Night's Dream," as to which Shakspere never seems to have made up his mind whether the action covered a week or a single night, is only one of a dozen instances of his slips. But no: Shakspere, not being a nineteenth-century poet, would have spoiled the case for modern degeneration by shewing that it could have been made out on the same grounds before the telegraph and the railway were dreamt of; and besides, Nordau likes Shakspere, just as he likes Goethe, and holds him up as a model of sanity against the nineteenth-century poets. Thus Wagner is a degenerate because he made puns; and Shakspere, who made worse ones, is a great poet. Swinburne, with his "unmeaning" refrains of "Small red leaves in the mill water," and "Apples of gold for the King's daughter," is a diseased madman; but Shakspere, with his "In spring time, the only merry ring time, when birds do sing hey ding a ding ding" (if this is not the worst case of "echolalia" in the world, what *is* echolalia?), is a sober master mind. Rossetti, with his Blessed Damozel leaning out from the gold bar of heaven, who weeps, although she is in paradise, which is a happy place, who describes the dead in one place as "dressed in white" and in another as "mounting like thin flames," and whose calculations of days and years do not resemble those in commercial diaries, is that dangerous and cranky thing, "a mystic"; whilst Goethe, the author of the second part of "Faust," if you please, is a hard-headed, accurate, sound scientific poet. As to the list of inconsistencies of which poor Ibsen is convicted, it is too long to be dealt with in detail. But I assure you I am not doing Nordau less than justice when I say that, if he had accused Shakspere of inconsistency on the ground that Othello is represented in the first act as loving his wife, and in the last as strangling her, the demonstration would have left you with more respect for his good sense than his pages on Ibsen, the folly of which goes beyond all patience.*

When Nordau deals with painting and music, he is less irritating, because he errs through ignorance, and ignorance, too, of a sort that is now perfectly well recognized and understood. We all know what the old-fashioned literary and scientific writer, who cultivated his intellect without ever dreaming of cultivating his

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* Perhaps I had better give one example. Nordau first quotes a couple of speeches from "An Enemy of the People" and "The Wild Duck."

STOCKMANN: I love my native town so well that I had rather ruin it than see it flourishing on a lie. All men who live on lies must be exterminated like vermin. ("An Enemy of the People.")

RELLING: Yes, I said illusion [lie]. For illusion, you know, is the stimulating principle. Rob the average man of his life illusion, and you rob him of his happiness at the same time. ("The Wild Duck.")

Nordau proceeds to comment as follows:

Now, what is Ibsen's real opinion? Is a man to strive for truth or to swelter in deceit? Is Ibsen with Stockmann or with Relling? Ibsen owes us an answer to these questions, or, rather, he replies to them affirmatively and negatively with equal ardor and equal poetic power.

eyes and ears, can be relied upon to say when painters and composers are under discussion. Nordau makes a fool of himself with laughable punctuality. He gives us "the most glorious period of the Renaissance" and "the rosy dawn of the new thought" with all the gravity of the older editions of Murray's guides to Italy. He tells us that "to copy Cimabue and Giotto is comparatively easy; to imitate Raphael it is necessary to be able to draw and paint to perfection." He lumps Fra Angelico with Giotto and Cimabue, as if they represented the same stage in the development of technical execution, and Pollajuolo with Ghirlandajo. "Here," he says, speaking of the great Florentine painters, from Giotto to Masaccio, "were paintings bad in drawing, faded or smoked, their coloring either originally feeble or impaired by the action of centuries, pictures *executed with the awkwardness of a learner*, ... easy of imitation, since, in painting pictures in the style of the early masters, faulty drawing, deficient sense of color, and *general artistic incapacity*, are so many advantages." To make any comment on this would be to hit a man when he is down. Poor Nordau offers it as a demonstration that Ruskin, who gave this sort of ignorant nonsense its death-blow, was a delirious mystic. Also that Millais and Holman Hunt, in the days of the pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, strove to acquire the qualities of the early Florentine masters because the Florentine easel pictures were so much easier to imitate than those of the apprentices in Raphael's Roman fresco factory.

In music we find Nordau equally content with the theories as to how music is composed which were current among literary men fifty years ago. He tells us of "the severe discipline and fixed rules of the theory of composition, which gave a grammar to the musical babbling of primeval times, and made of it a worthy medium for the expression of the emotions of civilized men," and describes Wagner as breaking these "fixed rules" and rebelling against this "severe discipline" because he was "an inattentive mystic, abandoned to amorphous dreams." This notion that there are certain rules, derived from a science of counterpoint, by the application of which pieces of music can be constructed just as an equilateral triangle can be constructed on a given straight line by any one who has mastered Euclid's first proposition is highly characteristic of the generation of blind and deaf critics to which Nordau belongs. It is evident that, if there were "fixed rules" by which Wagner or any one else could have composed good music, there could have been no more "severe discipline" in the work of composition than in the work of arranging a list of names in alphabetical order. The severity of artistic discipline is produced by the fact that in creative art no ready-made rules can help you. There is nothing to guide you to the right expression for your thought except your own sense of beauty and fitness; and, as you advance upon those who went before you, that sense of beauty and fitness is necessarily often in conflict, not with fixed rules, because there are no rules, but with precedents, which are what Nordau means by "fixed rules," as far as he knows what he is talking about well enough to mean anything at all. If Wagner had composed the prelude to "Das Rheingold" with a half close at the end of the eighth bar and a full close at the end of the sixteenth, he would undoubtedly have followed the precedent of Mozart and other great composers, and complied with the requirements of Messrs. Hanslick, Nordau and Company. Only, as it happened, that was not what he wanted to do. His purpose was to produce a tone picture of the mighty flood in the depths of the Rhine; and, as the poetic imagination does not conceive the Rhine as stopping at every eight feet to take off its hat to Herren Hanslick and Nordau, the closes and half closes are omitted, and poor Herr Nordau, huffed at being passed by as if he were a person of no consequence, complains that the composer is "an inattentive mystic, abandoned to amorphous dreams." But, even if Wagner's descriptive purpose is left out of the question, Nordau's general criticism of him is an ignorant one; for the truth is that Wagner, like most artists who have great intellectual power, was dominated in the technical work of his gigantic scores by so strong a regard for system, order, logic, symmetry, and syntax that, when in the course of time his melody and harmony become perfectly familiar to us, he will be ranked with Händel as a composer whose extreme regularity of procedure must make his work appear drily mechanical to those who cannot catch its dramatic inspiration. If Nordau, having no sense of that inspiration, had said: "This fellow, whom you all imagine to be the creator of a new heaven and a new earth in music out of a chaos of poetic emotion, is really an arrant pedant and formalist," I should have pricked up my ears and listened to him with some curiosity, knowing how good a case a really keen technical critic could make out for that view. As it is, I have only to expose him as having picked up a vulgar error under the influence of a vulgar literary superstition. For the rest, you will hardly need any prompting of mine to appreciate the absurdity of dismissing as "inattentive" the Dresden conductor, the designer and founder of the Bayreuth enterprise, the humorous and practical author of "On Conducting," and the man who scored and stage-managed the four evenings of "The Niblung Ring." I purposely leave out the composer, the poet, the philosopher, the reformer, since Nordau cannot be compelled to admit that Wagner's eminence in these departments was real. Striking them all out accordingly, there remain the indisputable, objective facts of Wagner's practical professional ability and organizing power to put Nordau's diagnosis of Wagner as an "amorphous," inattentive person out of the question. If Nordau had one hundredth part of the truly terrific power of attention which Wagner must have maintained all his life almost as easily as a common man breathes, he would not now be so deplorable an example of the truth of his own contention that the power of attention may be taken as the measure of mental strength.

Nordau's trick of calling rhyme "echolalia" when he happens not to like the rhymer is reapplied in the case of authorship, which he calls "graphomania" when he happens not to like the author. He insists that Wagner, who was a voluminous author as well as a composer, was a graphomaniac; and his proof is that in his books we find "the restless repetition of one and the same strain of thought. . . . . 'Opera and Drama,' 'Judaism in Music,' 'Religion and the State,' 'Art and Religion,' and 'The Vocation of Opera' are nothing more than the amplification of single passages in 'The Art-Work of the Future.'" This is a capital example of Nordau's limited power of attention. The moment that limited power is concentrated on his theory of degeneration, he loses sight of everything else, and drives his one borrowed horse into every obstacle on the road. To those of us who can attend to more than one thing at a time, there is no observation more familiar, and more frequently confirmed, than that this growth of pregnant single sentences into whole books which Nordau discovers in Wagner, balanced as it always is by the contraction of whole boyish chapters into single epigrams, is the process by which all great writers, speakers, artists, and thinkers elaborate their life-work. Let me take a writer after Nordau's own heart, — a specialist in lunacy, of course, — one whom he quotes as a trustworthy example of what he calls "the clear, mentally sane author, who, feeling himself impelled to say something, once for all expresses himself as distinctly and impressively as it is possible for him to do, and has done with it": namely, Dr. Henry Maudsley. Dr. Maudsley is a clever and cultivated specialist in insanity, who has written several interesting books, consisting of repetitions, amplifications, and historical illustrations of the same idea, which is, if I may put it rather more bluntly than the urbane author, nothing less than the identification of religious with sexual ecstasy. And the upshot of it is the conventional scientific pessimism, from which Dr. Maudsley never gets away; so that his last book repeats his first book, instead of leaving it far behind, as Wagner's "State and Religion" leaves his "Art and Revolution" behind. But, now that I have prepared the way by quoting Dr. Maudsley, why should I not ask Herr Nordau himself to step before the looking-glass and tell us frankly whether, even in the ranks of his "psychiatrists" and lunacy doctors, he can pick out a crank more hopelessly obsessed with one idea than himself. If you want an example of "echolalia," can you find a more shocking one than this gentleman who, when you say "mania," immediately begins to gabble Egomania, Graphomania, Megalomania, Onomatomania, Pyromania, Kleptomania, Dipsomania, Erotomania, Arithmomania, Oniomania, and is started off by the termination "phobia" with a string of Agoraphobia, Claustrophobia, Rupophobia, Iophobia, Nosophobia, Aichmophobia, Belenophobia, Cremnophobia, and Trichophobia? After which he suddenly observes: "This is simply philologico-medical trifling," — a remark which looks like returning sanity until he follows it up by clasping his temples in the true bedlamite manner, and complaining that "psychiatry is being stuffed with useless and disturbing designations," whereas, if the psychiatrists would only listen to him, they would see that there is only one phobia and one mania, — namely, degeneracy. That is, the philoiogico-medical triflers are not crazy enough for him. He is so utterly mad on the subject of degeneration that he finds the symptoms of it in the loftiest geniuses as plainly as in the lowest jailbirds, the only exceptions being himself, Lom-

broso, Krafft-Ebing, Dr. Maudsley, and — for the sake of appearances — Goethe, Shakspere, and Beethoven. Perhaps he would even except a case so convenient in many ways for his theory as Coleridge sooner than spoil the connection between degeneration and "railway spine." If a man's senses are acute, he is degenerate, hyperæsthesia having been observed in asylums. If he is particular as to what he wears, he is degenerate; silk dressing-gowns and knee-breeches are grave symptoms, and woollen shirts conclusive. If he is negligent in these matters, clearly he is inattentive, and therefore degenerate. If he drinks, he is neurotic; if he is a vegetarian and teetotaller, let him be locked up at once. If he lives an evil life, that fact condemns him without further words; if, on the other hand, his conduct is irreproachable, he is a wretched "mattoid," incapable of the will and courage to realize his vicious propensities in action. If he writes verse, he is afflicted with echolalia; if he writes prose, he is a graphomaniac; if in his books he is tenacious of his ideas, he is obsessed; if not, he is "amorphous" and "inattentive." Wagner, as we have seen, contrived to be both obsessed and inattentive, as might be expected from one who was "himself alone charged with a greater abundance of degeneration than all the other degenerates put together." And so on and so forth.

There is, however, one sort of mental weakness, common among men who take to science, as so many people take to art, without the necessary brain power, which Nordau, with amusing unconsciousness of himself, has omitted. I mean the weakness of the man who, when his theory works out into a flagrant contradiction of the facts, concludes: "So much the worse for the facts; let them be altered," instead of: "So much the worse for my theory." What in the name of common sense is the value of a theory which identifies Ibsen, Wagner, Tolstoi, Ruskin, and Victor Hugo with the refuse of our prisons and lunatic asylums? What is to be said of the state of mind of an inveterate pamphleteer and journalist who, instead of accepting that identification as a *reductio-ad-absurdum* of the theory, desperately sets to work to prove it by pointing out that there are numerous resemblances,—that they all have heads and bodies, appetites, aberrations, whims, weaknesses, asymmetrical features, erotic impulses, fallible judgments, and the like common properties, not merely of all human beings, but all vertebrate organisms. Take Nordau's own list,—"vague and incoherent thought, the tyranny of the association of ideas, the presence of obsessions, erotic excitability, religious enthusiasm, feebleness of perception, will, memory, and judgment, as well as inattention and instability"; is there a single man capable of understanding these terms who will not plead guilty to some experience of all of them, especially when he is accused vaguely and unscientifically, without any statement of the subject, or the moment, or the circumstances to which the accusation refers, or any attempt to fix a standard of sanity? I could prove Nordau to be an elephant on more evidence than he has brought to prove that our greatest men are degenerate lunatics. The papers in which Swift, having predicted the death of the sham prophet Bickerstaff on a certain date, did, after that date, immediately prove that he was dead are much more closely and fairly reasoned than any of Nordau's chapters. And Swift, though he afterwards died in a madhouse, was too sane to be the dupe of his own logic. At that rate, where will Nordau die? Probably in a highly respectable suburban villa.

Nordau's most likeable point is the freedom and boldness with which he expresses himself. Speaking of Peladan (of whose works I know nothing), he says, whilst holding him up as a typical degenerate of the mystical variety: "His moral ideal is high and noble. He pursues with ardent hatred all that is base and vulgar, every form of egoism, falsehood, and thirst for pleasure; and his characters are thoroughly aristocratic souls, whose thoughts are concerned only with the worthiest, if somewhat exclusively artistic, interests of society." On the other hand, Maeterlinck is a "poor devil of an idiot"; Mr. W. D. O'Connor, for describing Whitman as "the good gray poet," is politely introduced as "an American driveller"; Nietzsche "belongs, body and soul, to the flock of the mangy sheep"; Ibsen is "a malignant, anti-social simpleton"; and so on. Only occasionally is he insincerely Pharisaical in his tone, as, for instance, when he pretends to become virtuously indignant over Wagner's dramas, and plays to Mrs. Grundy by exclaiming ironically: "How unperverted must wives and readers be, when they are in a state of mind to witness these pieces without blushing crimson and sinking into the earth for shame!" This, to do him justice, is only an exceptional lapse; a far more characteristic comment of his on Wagner's love-scenes is: "The lovers in his pieces behave like tom cats gone mad, rolling in contortions and convulsions over a root of valerian." And he is not always on the side of the police, so to speak; for he is as careless of the feelings of the "beer-drinking" German *bourgeoisie* as of those of the æsthetes. Thus, though on one page he is pointing out that Socialism and all other forms of discontent with the existing social order are "stigmata of degeneration," on the next he is talking pure Karl Marx. For example, taking the two sides in their order:

> Ibsen's egomania assumes the form of Anarchism. He is in a state of constant revolt against all that exists. . . . . The psychological roots of his anti-social impulses are well known. They are the degenerate's incapacity for self-adaptation, and the resultant discomfort in the midst of circumstances to which, in consequence of his organic deficiencies, he cannot accommodate himself. "The criminal," says Lombroso, "through his neurotic and impulsive nature, and his hatred of the institutions which have punished or imprisoned him, is a perpetual latent political rebel, who finds in insurrection the means, not only of satisfying his passions, but of even having them countenanced for the first time by a numerous public.
>
> Wagner is a declared Anarchist. . . . . He betrays that mental condition which the degenerate share with enlightened reformers, born criminals with the martyrs of human progress, — namely, deep, devouring discontent with existing facts. . . . . He would like to crush "political and criminal civilization," as he calls it.

Now for Nordau speaking for himself.

> Is it not the duty of intelligent philanthropy and justice, without destroying civilization, to adopt a better system of economy and transform the artisan from a factory convict, condemned to misery and ill health, into a free producer of wealth, who enjoys the fruits of his labor himself, and works no more than is compatible with his health and his claims on life?
>
> Every gift that a man receives from some other man without work, without reciprocal service, is an alms, and as such is deeply immoral.
>
> Not in the impossible "return to Nature" lies healing for human misery, but in the reasonable organization of our struggle with nature, — I might say, in universal and obligatory service against it, from which only the crippled should be exempted.
>
> In England it was Tolstoi's sexual morality that excited the greatest interest; for in that country economic reasons condemn a formidable number of girls, particularly of the educated classes, to forego marriage; and, from a theory which honored chastity as the highest dignity and noblest human destiny, and branded marriage with gloomy wrath as abominable depravity, these poor creatures would naturally derive rich consolation for their lonely, empty lives and their cruel exclusion from the possibility of fulfilling their natural calling.

So it appears that Nordau, too, shares "the degenerate's incapacity for self-adaptation, and the resultant discomfort in the midst of circumstances to which, in consequence of his organic deficiencies, he cannot accommodate himself." But he has his usual easy way out of the dilemma. If Ibsen and Wagner are dissatisfied with the world, that is because the world is too good for them; but, if Max Nordau is dissatisfied, it is because Max is too good for the world. His modesty does not permit him to draw the distinction in these exact terms. Here is his statement of it:

> Discontent shews itself otherwise in the degenerate than in reformers. The latter grow angry over real evils only, and make rational proposals for their remedy which are in advance of the time: these remedies may presuppose a better and wiser humanity than actually exists; but, at least, they are capable of being defended on reasonable grounds. The degenerate, on the other hand, selects among the arrangements of civilization such as are either immaterial or distinctly suitable, in order to rebel against them. His fury has either ridiculously insignificant aims, or simply beats the air. He either gives no earnest thought to improvement, or hatches astoundingly mad projects for making the world happy. His fundamental frame of mind is persistent rage against everything and every one, which he displays in venomous phrases, savage threats, and the destructive mania of wild beasts. *Wagner is a good specimen of this species.*

Wagner is only named here because the passage occurs in the almost incredibly foolish chapter which is headed with his name. In another chapter it might have been Ibsen, or Tolstoi, or Ruskin, or William Morris, or any other eminent artist who shares Nordau's objection, and yours and mine, to our existing social arrangements. In the face of this, it is really impossible to deny oneself the fun of asking Nordau, with all possible good humor, who he is and what he is, that he should rail in this fashion at great men. Wagner was discontented with the condition of musical art in Europe. In essay after essay he pointed out with the most laborious exactitude what it was he complained of, and how it might be remedied. He not only shewed, in the teeth of the most envenomed opposition from all the dunderheads, pedants, and vested interests in Europe, what the musical drama ought to be as a work of art, but how theatres for its proper performance should be managed,— nay, how they should be built, down to the arrangement of the seats and the position of the instruments in the orchestra. And he not only shewed this on paper, but he successfully composed the music dramas, built a model theatre, gave the

model performances, *did* the impossible; so that there is now nobody left, not even Hanslick, who cares to stultify himself by repeating the old anti-Wagner cry of craziness and Impossibilism,—nobody, save only Max Nordau, who, like a true journalist, is fact-proof. William Morris objected to the abominable ugliness of early Victorian decoration and furniture, to the rhymed rhetoric which has done duty for poetry ever since the Renaissance, to kamptulicon stained glass, and, later on, to the shiny commercial gentility of typography according to the American ideal, which was being spread through England by "Harper's" and "The Century," and which had not, like your abolition of "justifying" in Liberty, the advantage of saving trouble. Well, did he sit down, as Nordau suggests, to rail helplessly at the men who were at all events getting the work of the world done, however inartistically? Not a bit of it; he designed and manufactured the decorations he wanted, and furnished and decorated houses with them; he put into public halls and churches tapestries and picture-windows which cultivated people now travel to see as they travel to see first-rate fifteenth-century work in that kind; the books from his Kelmscott Press, printed with type designed by his own hand, are pounced on by collectors like the treasures of our national museums, all this work, remember, involving the successful conducting of a large business establishment and factory, and being relieved by the incidental production of a series of poems and prose romances which have placed their author in the position of the greatest living English poet. Now let me repeat the terms in which Nordau describes this kind of activity. "Ridiculously insignificant aims — beating the air — no earnest thought to improvement — astoundingly mad projects for making the world happy — persistent rage against everything and every one, displayed in venomous phrases, savage threats, and destructive mania of wild beasts." Is there not something deliciously ironical in the ease with which a splenetic pamphleteer, with nothing to shew for himself except a bookful of blunders tacked on to a mock scientific theory picked up at second hand from a few lunacy doctors with a literary turn, should be able to create a European scandal by declaring that the greatest creative artists of the century are barren and hysterical madmen? I do not know what the American critics have said about Nordau; but here the tone has been that there is much in what he says, and that he is evidently an authority on the subjects with which he deals. And yet I assure you, on my credit as a man who lives by art criticism, that from his preliminary description of a Morris design as one "on which strange birds flit among crazily ramping branches, and blowzy flowers coquet with vain butterflies" (which is about as sensible as a description of the Norman chapel in the Tower of London as a characteristic specimen of Baroque architecture would be) to his coupling of Cimabue and Fra Angelico as primitive Florentine masters; from his unashamed bounce about "the conscientious observance of the laws of counterpoint" by Beethoven and other masters celebrated for breaking them to his unlucky shot about "a pedal bass with correct harmonization" (a pedal bass happening to be the particular instance in which even the professor-made rules of "correct harmonization" are suspended),—Nordau gives himself away time after time as an authority upon the fine arts. But his critics, being for the most part ignorant literary men like himself, with sharpened wits and neglected eyes and ears, have swallowed Cimabue and Ghirlandajo and the pedal bass like so many gulls. Here an Ibsen admirer may maintain that Ibsen is an exception to the degenerate theory and should be classed with Goethe; there a Wagnerite may plead that Wagner is entitled to the honors of Beethoven; elsewhere one may find a champion of Rossetti venturing cautiously to suggest a suspicion of the glaringly obvious fact that Nordau has read only the two or three popular ballads like "The Blessed Damozel," "Eden Bower," "Sister Helen," and so on, which every smatterer reads, and that his knowledge of the mass of pictorial, dramatic, and decorative work turned out by Rossetti, Burne Jones, Ford Madox Brown, William Morris, and Holman Hunt, without a large knowledge and careful study of which no man can possibly speak with any critical authority of the pre-Raphaelite movement, is apparently limited to a glance at Holman Hunt's "Shadow of the Cross," or possibly an engraving thereof. And, if Nordau were to convince me tomorrow that I am wrong, and that he knows all the works of the school thoroughly, I should only be forced to assure him regretfully that he was all the greater fool. As it is, I have nothing worse to say of his art criticism than that it is the work of a pretentious ignoramus, instantly recognizable as such by any expert. I copy his bluntness of speech as a matter of courtesy to him.

And now, my dear Tucker, I have told you as much about Nordau's book as it is worth. In a country where art was really known to the people, instead of being merely read about, it would not be necessary to spend three lines on such a work. But in England, where nothing but superstitious awe and self-mistrust prevents most men from thinking about art as Nordau boldly speaks about it; where to have a sense of art is to be one in a thousand, the other nine hundred and ninety-nine being either Philistine voluptuaries or Puritan anti-voluptuaries,—it is useless to pretend that Nordau's errors will be self-evident. Already we have native writers, without half his cleverness or energy of expression, clumsily imitating his sham scientific vivisection in their attacks on artists whose work they happen to dislike. Therefore, in riveting his book to the counter, I have used a nail long enough to go through a few pages by other people as well; and that must be my excuse for my disregard of the familiar editorial stigma of degeneracy which Nordau calls Agoraphobia, or Fear of Space.

G. Bernard Shaw.

London, June, 1895.

"Voluntary State Socialism."

Have we all been wrong in believing that there are only "two Socialisms,"—the Socialism of compulsion and the State, and the voluntary Socialism of the libertarian? The editor of the "Dawn," Mr. Bliss, has discovered a new kind of Socialism, which he denominates "voluntary Socialism through the State." Mr. Bliss was led to this discovery through a realization of the necessity of having a Socialism in the United States that would harmonize with the national genius and the historically evolved institutions. He believes that each country evolves a Socialism that is peculiar to itself, and that an attempt to impose upon one country the product of another is necessarily futile. Surveying the civilized world, Mr. Bliss finds that in France Socialism is anarchical, in Germany *doctrinaire*, in Switzerland legal or governmental, and in England evolutionary or spontaneous. Owing to the profound sympathies and similarities between this country and England, our Socialism must correspond closely to the English form.

Without stopping to question these generalizations, let us proceed to learn Mr. Bliss's idea of real American Socialism. Americans, he says, are jealous of the State and are suspicious of Socialism by law. Alien Socialisms find insurmountable obstacles in American traditions and sentiments. The only Socialism they will welcome is voluntary Socialism through the State, which is "Socialism by practice." "When," explains Mr. Bliss, "a democratic government operates a railroad, but *allows anybody else to do so also*, that is voluntary Socialism through the State." And he continues: "Let our cities vote to establish gas works. Let any private company that wants to do so also [establish such works], provided it pays what it is worth to tear up the streets."

We know now what Mr. Bliss means, and, in view of his earnestness, it is necessary to analyze his proposition. It ought not to be difficult to open his eyes to the fallacious character of his notion. Of course, in so far as he allows freedom of competition by private individuals and companies, he is less despotic than the old-fashioned State Socialists, but his Socialism is not voluntary on that account. Where does the State get capital to carry on industries and start in business of all kinds? It can get it in one way only,—by taxing all citizens. The citizen thus taxed is allowed to patronize private concerns, but he is compelled to pay twice for the same services. He gets no return for the tax levied by the State, if he chooses to deal with the State's competitors. The State operates gas works at his expense, but, if he pays a private company for gas, his payment to the State is pure loss. To escape such double payment he must accept the products offered by the State. Of course the State's management might be so wasteful and inefficient that he might actually find it more economical to sacrifice his contribution to the State funds and pay the price of private enterprise for the ready product, but his loss is still there, and he has given something for nothing. So far as he is concerned, the Socialism is not voluntary, for the tax is compulsory and he is not permitted to decline to support the State's industrial enterprises. To be sure, Mr. Bliss assures us that there is no necessity of raising the rate of taxation at all in order to enable the State to carry on production, but the assertion is manifestly a careless one. Most States are heavily in debt, and any new undertaking involves an increase of taxation. Socialism, which, even under Mr. Bliss's plan, means control, not of one or two industries, but of most industries at least, would plainly require

an enormous capital that could not be obtained otherwise than by partial expropriation. Some municipalities operate ferries and gas or water works, but even if they are altogether successful in these, it certainly cannot be claimed that they have solved the labor problem and abolished poverty within their limits. Mr. Bliss expects his State Socialism to abolish poverty; how can this be done without carrying out the entire programme? And how can Socialism be fully established without an increase of taxation that would amount to expropriation?

It is, indeed, because State Socialists are aware of this that they openly declare for expropriation and do not even pretend to contemplate the existence of private enterprise side by side with State industry. On a small scale this is possible, but small-scale Socialism would not effect the objects of the State Socialists or of Mr. Bliss.

But perhaps Mr. Bliss means to tax only those who consent to be taxed and who freely give their capital to the State for industrial purposes. Ah! that is not "Socialism through the State," but voluntary coöperation among individuals, for within the limits of these activities the State has abolished itself by abandoning compulsion and become a voluntary association. No, Mr. Bliss, "voluntary Socialism through the State" is a contradiction in terms. There are only two Socialisms, and, if you think that State Socialism is alien to the spirit of American institutions, you are bound to espouse voluntary Socialism. V. Y.

The plutocratic press is very indignant with Judge Brown, of the federal supreme court, for his pessimistic address to the Yale students. It won't do to let a man who cannot be lied about and vilified in the usual manner tell the people that "bribery and corruption are so universal as to threaten the very structure of society," that "universal suffrage . . . is so skilfully manipulated as to rivet the chains of the poor man and to secure to the rich man a predominance in politics he has never enjoyed under a restricted system," and that in no country in the world is the influence of corporate wealth more potent than here. If judges of the highest court are to speak right out in open meeting in this strain, it will be impossible to apply abusive epithets to Altgeld, Debs, Waite, and Coxey for saying the same things. The plutocratic mouthpieces have felt called upon to reason with Judge Brown and argue him out of his pessimism. Bribery, they tell him, is not universal, since it does not dog the steps of presidents, judges, and law-makers, and wealth is not potent, since rich men have very little chance of political preferment nowadays. Do they really expect to impress Judge Brown with this sort of argumentation? Even the average reader is not likely to be satisfied with it. He knows that the senate has often been described as a club of millionaires, and that few candidates can be elected without "barrels." Moreover, if rich men were really ineligible, they could accomplish all their objects by sending their tools to the legislatures. The Goulds and Havemeyers do not need to make laws; they buy legislatures ready-made and get anything they please enacted into law. As to the prevalence of bribery and corruption, here is what, in an unguarded moment, Godkin himself was moved to say: "In the belief of nearly all the intelligent portion of our population the meeting of the legislature in January is simply the opening of a school of vice. As soon as the speaker is elected the members organize for the sale of legislation in quantities to suit purchasers or for the levy of blackmail." While Godkin had reference to the New York legislature, neither he nor anybody else would claim that other legislatures are in any way superior.

Governor Altgeld has been urging jury reform on the corporation agents collectively known as the Illinois legislature. He will not be heeded, of course, but it is a satisfaction to know that Governor Altgeld clearly sees what the defect in the system is. In Illinois juries are judges both of law and of fact in criminal cases, and hence the failure to obtain just decisions can only be due to the character and complexion of the juries. Governor Altgeld, realizing this, declares that "what is wanted is some method by which juries shall be taken from the great body of the people, so that they may represent all callings and conditions." The curse of the Illinois system has been the packing of juries; yet the stupid legislature passed a law some years ago actually providing that juries should be selected from the list of those citizens who neglected to exercise their right of suffrage, thus making jury service nothing more than a penalty for failure to vote. Can such a body be expected to adopt Governor Altgeld's rational view?

Anarchist Letter-Writing Corps.

The Secretary wants every reader of Liberty to send in his name for enrolment. Those who do so thereby pledge themselves to write, when possible, a letter every fortnight, on Anarchism or kindred subjects, to the "target" assigned in Liberty for that fortnight, and to notify the secretary promptly in case of any failure to write to a target (which it is hoped will not often occur), or in case of temporary or permanent withdrawal from the work of the Corps. All, whether members or not, are asked to lose no opportunity of informing the secretary of suitable targets. Address, STEPHEN T. BYINGTON, 108 W. 13th St., New York City.

Writers who want to put their letters in a form that editors like to publish should use ink, black ink (but strong colored ink is better than faded black ink), and be sure to leave plenty of space between words in a line and between lines on a page. To write only on every other line of the paper is a custom favored by editors.

Target, section A. — The "Deseret Evening News," Salt Lake City, Utah, a Morman organ, had in its issue of July 6 a column editorial referring to the chapter on Mormonism in Whittick's "Bombs." After commending Whittick for fairness in his historical statements and in his description of the economic advantages of Mormonism, it says:

> The lecturer gives utterance to many a thoroughly Christian sentiment. Anarchist though he be, notably when he denounces persecution and demands liberty of conscience as one of the greatest boons to the children of men. The way in which Mr. Whittick treats his subject is very different from the general course adopted. Between Anarchism and Mormonism, we need hardly say, there can be no sympathy; the two are different as fire and water. The first aims, as we understand it, to establish liberty without law and without morality, — an utter impossibility, foolish in the extreme. In the pursuit of its work, no means seem to be shunned, not even the arbitrary destruction of life and property. Mormonism also aims at the establishment of liberty, but one built on law and order and morality such as are sanctioned by divine authority. Anarchism destroys; Mormonism builds up. The latter is the work of God; the former, the opposite. Yet, truth is truth wherever found, even in the mouth of an Anarchist.

Point out what is wrong in the editor's conception of Anarchism. Ask whether his worst ideas about it are taken from "Bombs," or any other Anarchist source, or whether they come from the statements current among the ignorant enemies of Anarchism. Recommend first-hand investigation. Point out the difference between dynamitism and Anarchism. Hit the government in any way you expect Mormons to appreciate; only say nothing of polygamy, as it is the Mormon's cue to keep quiet about that at present.

Section B. — Bolton Hall, 111 Broadway, New York city, wants attacks from an Anarchist standpoint on succession taxes and personal property taxes. Write against one or both of these.

STEPHEN T. BYINGTON.

Expert Reasoning.

[Henri Rochefort in L'Intransigeant.]

The report of the scientific commission appointed to investigate the means of poisoning the operatives in the government match-factories forcibly reminds one of the words of an official *savant* to Louis XVIII:

"Sire, these two gases are about to have the honor to decompose in your presence."

Our governmental chemists are no less obsequious; perhaps even more so. It is all that we can expect if they do not shed tears over this poor phosphorus, which soon will no longer have the honor to necrose the men and women who handle it, to the extent of dislocating their jaws.

The commission reluctantly appointed by M. Ribot clearly perceives, with its characteristically administrative *flair*, that the reform in the manufacture of matches will cause the hearts of a certain number of the government's *protégés* to bleed. The purveyors of the white poison occupy influential positions, and to announce to them, inconsiderately and abruptly, that they will soon find themselves dispossessed of their monopoly would be to give proof of revolting brutality.

See then to what ambages and circumlocutions the ministerial chemists resort! Not once, in the account of their experiments, do they consent to confess that the phosphorated paste employed hitherto is poisonous and deadly in the highest degree. They bring forward several others that seem to contain no phosphorus; that is all that they establish.

And even so they are careful to add that, in the case of two of the products submitted to their analysis, the inventors have refused to reveal the secret of the composition of their matches, contenting themselves with giving their word of honor that they contained no particle of phosphorus. In which these match-makers have acted with a prudence upon which we cannot too highly compliment them. If they had had the candor to unveil the mystery of their discovery, no doubt the State would have immediately appropriated it, declaring to them, in an extremely polite letter, that the government had long been in possession of the paste in question, it being the discovery of a modest clerk in the department of finance, who had generously made a present of it to his country.

Things do not take place otherwise in the war department, where the machinist who submits a new rifle for consideration is sure to meet an officer of genius who within the week has constructed a weapon identical with his own. The world is full of such extraordinary meetings!

On the day when some physicist in his work-room shall have finally solved the problem of balloon steering, we shall learn that the managers of the shops at Meudon devoted to military air navigation, and who in twenty years have not advanced the question a single step, were precisely on the point of launching into the air an apparatus operating on similar principles. Lucky, in fact, will be the inventor if he is not arrested and sent to the Iles du Salut for stealing a State secret.

However, such as they are, the matches presented by a Belgian engineer seem to combine the desired conditions. They are no more explosive than the matches now in use, which are not explosive at all; but they do not light more easily, which seems hardly credible, since the phosphorated matches, six times out of eight, do not light at all.

And in a careless fashion, as if it were the most insignificant of postscripts, the report adds that non-phosphorated matches have been in use for years in Russia, but in virtue of a privilege granted by the crown. Now, in France there is no crown, since we live in a

republic, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding. Therefore it has been impossible hitherto to adopt a substitute for phosphorated matches, as thereby we should have seemed to be borrowing from the Russian empire its ways of governing, which would have been unworthy of a great democracy like ours.

So it is through pure republicanism that our different ministers have continued to strew the floors of the French match-factories with cripples and corpses.

What effect does this logic produce upon you? For my part, I find it phosphorescent.

The Logic of the Situation.

[Le Figaro.]

"Le Journal Officiel" will shortly publish the following ministerial decree,—an inevitable result of the recent votes of the chamber of deputies reducing the tax on mild beverages and increasing the tax on alcohol:

Whereas, the increase of the tax on alcohol will not bear fruit unless the consumption of alcohol increases; and

Whereas, it is the duty of every good citizen to aid in bringing about this result in the measure of his resources; and

Whereas, for instance, every time that a French citizen takes a little glass of brandy after his meal, he renders a service to his country proportional to the amount of alcohol absorbed, thereby intensifying the pleasure that he derives from it; and

Whereas, under these conditions, drunkenness, though remaining blameworthy from the moral point of view, ceases to be so from the patriotic point of view; and

Whereas, there have long been in existence, in all parts of the country, so-called Temperance Societies, whose precise purpose is to combat the progress of alcoholism; and

Whereas, the object of these societies is now placed in antagonism to the intent of the law on alcohol and to the interest of the country; and

Whereas, consequently, the Temperance Societies are a public danger, constituting an obstacle in the way of balancing the budget; and

Whereas, it is now the duty of good citizens to encourage the organization of Intemperance Societies,—

It is hereby decreed, that all the existing Temperance Societies are abolished.

The minister of the interior is charged with the execution of this decree.

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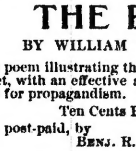

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